

Ask any action-movie fan about their favourite car chase scene and they'll have a ready answer. And it's bound to be something along the lines of "the pylon scene in *The French Connection*" or "the one with the Aston Martin in that James Bond film". And of course, they would rave about the eye-popping, front-seat action of *Ronin*.

There's something irresistible about a cleverly choreographed chase scene. Guaranteed to have you on the edge of your seat with your heart in your mouth, you are totally absorbed in the action and completely convinced of the danger of the death-defying stunts.

Legendary film director John Frankenheimer (*The Manchurian Candidate*,

CUT to the CHASE

If you love a good celluloid car chase, don't miss *Ronin*, featuring adrenalin-pumping scenes through the winding streets of France.

Birdman of Alcatraz) made his return to feature films with *Ronin*, a great old-fashioned spy thriller, which features some sensational action scenes, including what are regarded by many as the best screen car chases since the 1971 classic, *The French Connection*. This isn't surprising when we remember

that Frankenheimer actually directed the sequel to *The French Connection*, a film which certainly matches up to its predecessor

in its memorable car chase sequences.

In *Ronin*, Robert De Niro stars as a spy who heads up a crack team of international agents in the south of France on a dangerous mission to steal a mysterious silver briefcase. The contents of



going to love me back and not hurt me', that was a huge thing for me. When I met Tom, it was that thing: this is the person I've been searching for."

Nicole and Tom have cemented their union by adopting two children, Connor, aged four, and Isabella, aged six. Nicole loves being a mother and has told her kids that while they didn't come out of her tummy, they did come out of her heart. And she says she'd give up everything for them.

"I get so much joy out of just lying in bed and reading to my children, seeing their faces light up," she sighs. "That stuff is priceless. If it came to a choice between having a career or being a mother, I would give up my career. Wouldn't even think twice about it."

But, in the meantime, she believes she has plenty to give through her choice of film roles. *Practical Magic*, for example, gave her the chance to show female audiences that

"Nicole has told her kids that while they didn't come out of her tummy, they did come out of her heart."

it's not necessary to conform to be happy.

"I think that's a good message for young girls today," she says. "Instead of constantly trying to fit into a group, embrace your individuality."

That's not to say she doesn't have doubts about herself.

She's one of the world's most gorgeous actresses, but she admits to occasionally wishing she was shorter, with "bigger boobs". But still, Nicole's not one to be overly vain.

"I love to look plain on screen," she insists. "I'm not the type of actress who knows what my best angle is or how to light my face. I have no interest in it. When I cry, I say, 'Don't touch me up.' ■"

to step out of her clothes on stage nine times a week, a move that sparked headlines around the world.

"I'm so glad I did the play," she enthuses. "And it was such a risk doing it. Everyone said to me, 'Why are you doing this in a little theatre in London?' And I said, 'I want to do it. I want to play five different characters. I

want to risk it.' ... I'm doing theatre again — that's what I'm so glad about. Glad I jumped and did it. Now I'm going to try to do plays whenever I can."

While Nicole's career is going from strength to strength, she insists her husband and family remain her first priority. The couple has been plagued by rumours about their relation-

ship, but she says they're still very much in love after more than eight years of marriage.

"It's fantastic when you feel that no matter what happens you have your friend and your lover on this path with you," she says. "That's what I was always looking for. And when I found it and was able to go, 'I can love somebody and he's



Practically Magic

**In a return to comic form, Nicole Kidman casts a spell over viewers in *Practical Magic* as a thoroughly modern witch who is just to die for...
By Maree Allen.**

Nicole Kidman was still working on the Stanley Kubrick psychological drama *Eyes Wide Shut* when the opportunity arose to star in *Practical Magic*. She was so exhausted she almost turned the role down, but her co-star Sandra Bullock begged her to do it.

"I thought there was no way I could do another film," she admits. "Then Sandy won me over and convinced me to do it. She's very funny and she's become a good friend."

Sandra is equally enthusiastic about her co-star. But she says working with Nicole also made her horribly envious. "The fact that she has that body, I hate her so much!" she jokes. "It made me want to start fasting. She's elegant, she's like royalty. That's why she's able to pull off certain roles, whereas I probably couldn't."

Starring with Sandra in *Practical Magic* turned out to

be just what Nicole needed after the intensity of *Eyes Wide Shut*. Based on the best-selling book by Alice Hoffman, *Practical Magic* is a comedy-romance about a family of modern-day witches. Sandra plays the good sister, Nicole is the wild one.

"For me, it's a story about the strength of sisters," Nicole explains. "I've always wanted to do a story about sisters. When I first read it, I thought I should play the good sister because I always play the naughty one, but it wouldn't have worked with our personalities. I'm just basically the naughty one! I'm the oldest, sensible sister in real-life, so I suppose I'm

drawn to roles more removed from who I am."

Nicole has a strong relationship with her younger sister, Antonia. While the siblings usually live on opposite sides of the world, they keep in constant contact. Both are thrilled that Nicole will be in Australia for the next 12 months, while husband Tom Cruise works on *Mission: Impossible 2* and she stars in Baz Luhrman's new film, *Moulin Rouge*. And the Kidman sisters aren't the only ones excited by the move —

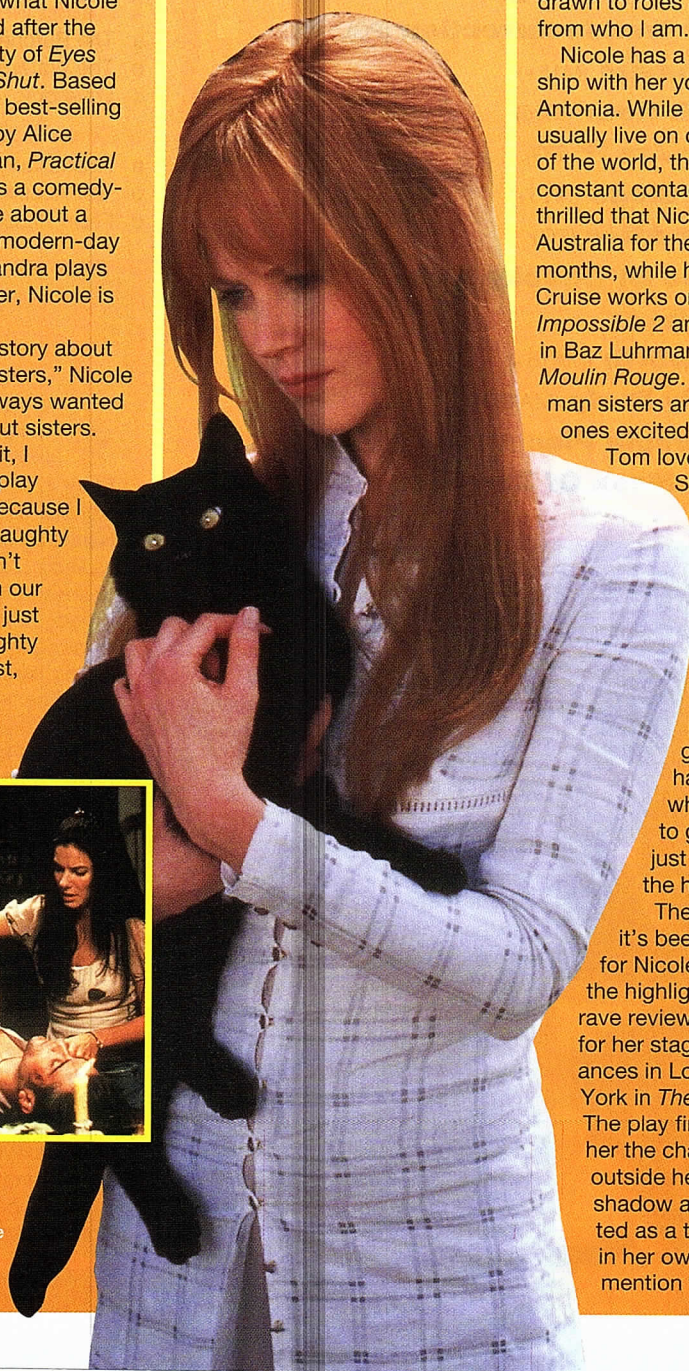
Tom loves being in Sydney, too.

"He has a very relaxing lifestyle down here," Nicole says. "People don't bother him much. He loves to play pool with the guys. And we have a boat, which we take to go fishing and just running around the harbour."

There's no doubt it's been a huge year for Nicole, and one of the highlights was the rave reviews she scored for her stage performances in London and New York in *The Blue Room*. The play finally gave her the chance to step outside her husband's shadow and be accepted as a talented actress in her own right. Not to mention the opportunity



Above: Sandra Bullock and Nicole Kidman work their magic. Right: Nicole cuddles up to a witch's best friend.



top 20

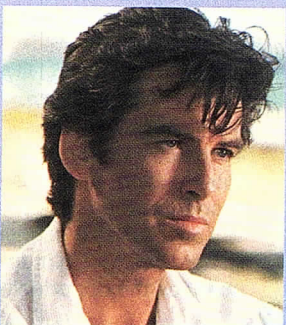
- 1 **Meet Joe Black** (MA15+) ☐
- 2 **Enemy Of The State** (M15+) ☐
- 3 **Rounders** (MA15+) ☐
- 4 **The Faculty** (MA15+) ☐
- 5 **Urban Legend** (MA15+) ☐
- 6 **Saving Private Ryan** (MA15+) ☐
- 7 **You've Got Mail** (PG) ☐
- 8 **Very Bad Things** (MA15+) ☐
- 9 **Star Trek Insurrection** (PG) ☐
- 10 **Stepmom** (M15+) ☐
- 11 **Rush Hour** (M15) ☐
- 12 **Who Am I?** (PG) ☐
- 13 **The Siege** (M15+) ☐
- 14 **Ever After** (PG) ☐
- 15 **Bride Of Chucky** (MA15+) ☐
- 16 **Paulie** (G) ☐
- 17 **Bulworth** (MA15+) ☐
- 18 **Hurly Burly** (MA15+) ☐
- 19 **A Simple Plan** (M15+) ☐
- 20 **The Mask Of Zorro** (M15+) ☐

Celebrity time-out

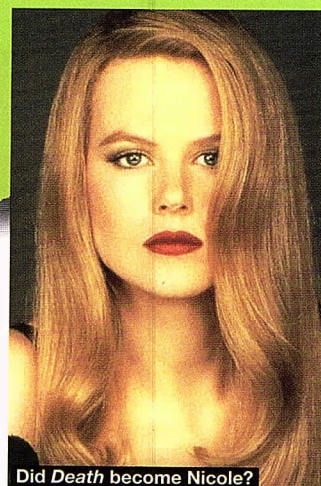


What is **Daniel Day Lewis** up to? An Italian newspaper has reported that he is living with an Italian family in Florence and learning to be a shoemaker. His agent isn't talking but he could be researching for a *My Left Foot* sequel – *My Left Shoe*.

Meanwhile, **Brosnan, Pierce Brosnan** is the latest celebrity to lend his star status to the green organisation, Planet Ark. Pierce is currently filming the latest Bond flick, *The World is Not Enough* but took time out to record his on-line eco-message, aimed at kids. "I did it because I'm concerned and because I have children," he says. "When I pop my clogs I'd like to be able to say I did something."



What sort of boy is Adam?



Did Death become Nicole?

Movie Match-up

Which of the following movies did these stars appear in?

1 Adam Sandler:

- a The Butcher Boy
- b The Waterboy
- c Loverboy

3 Nicole Kidman:

- a Dead Calm
- b Death Becomes Her
- c To Die For

3 Sean Connery:

- a Rush Hour
- b The Russia House
- c From Russia With Love

4 Eric Stoltz:

- a Naked
- b Naked In New York
- c Naked Lunch

Flicks for kids

★ There's plenty of buzz already about *Toy Story 2*, which will again star the voices of Tom Hanks as Woody and Tim Allen as Buzz Lightyear. **Plot:** An obsessed toy collector steals Woody, and so Buzz gathers the toys together for a daring rescue.

★ The live-action *Inspector Gadget* is loosely based on the cartoon and stars Matthew Broderick as the bumbling detective, along with Rupert Everett as his nemesis Dr Claw. **Plot:** Big-screen Gadget is more well-meaning than the cartoon's clumsy hero but retains all the "gadgets", making this flick one for the special effects junkies. Example: Broderick sports a detachable ear which moves around and listens into people's private conversations.

